

UNITED KINGDOM ACCREDITATION SERVICE
POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of 27th Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd June

Present

Ron Gainsford (Chair)	Chartered Trading Standards Institute
Carol Stewart (CS)	British Measurement & Testing Association
Daniel Mansfield (DM)	British Standards Institution
Estelle Clark (EC)	Chartered Quality Institute
Sue Brand (SB)	Care England
Sarah Veale (SV)	Non-Executive Director, UKAS
Chelvi Leonard (CL)	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Richard Sanders (RS)	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Dr Stefan Kukula (SK)	Engineering Equipment & Materials Users' Association
Chris Rowe (CR)	Health and Safety Executive
Dave Thomas (DT)	Ministry of Defence
Wayne Terry (WT)	Association of British Certification Bodies
Andy Evans	GAMBICA
Matt Gantley (MG)	UKAS
Lorraine Turner (LT)	UKAS
Hugh Taylor (HT)	UKAS
Suzi Daley (SD Sec.)	UKAS

1- Welcome, Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the 27th meeting of the UKAS PAC, acknowledging that this was the first time the PAC had met virtually. Apologies were received from **RS** on behalf of Will Creswell who has recently taken over responsibility for standards and accreditation within OPSS.

The Chair then reminded Members of the need to declare any potential conflict of interest in line with the revised PAC Terms of Reference. None were declared. **SD** then obtained PAC approval to record the meeting to aid accurate minute taking.

2- Minutes of the 26th Meeting of the Policy Advisory Council

PAC/06/20

SD reported that no comments had been received on the draft minutes circulated. **AE** noted that he had inadvertently been omitted from the list of attendees [since amended]. In relation to Action Point 2, **The Chair** asked **HT** to update the PAC on the work that UKAS had been doing with Surrey County Council (SCC) as our Primary Authority in response to the circulation of an increased number of counterfeit PPE certificates relating to management systems. **HT** informed Members that to help address this problem UKAS has produced a 'check list' for validating certificates which SCC has sent to Trading Standards Offices. The information is also on the UKAS website:

<https://www.ukas.com/news/checking-the-validity-of-ce-marked-ppe/>

More generally **HT** said that the UKAS/SCC relationship was now well established and being maintained through regular meetings; the next one scheduled for 4 June.

DT said that the MoD procurement had been having similar issues with PPE in the work it was doing with NHS England. He added that he had been in touch with Kevin Belson at UKAS and stressed the importance of UKAS and its stakeholders collaborating with MoD on its findings and in joining forces to tackle this issue throughout the supply chain. **HT** agreed this was very important and offered to share with MoD relevant information shared with and received from SCC.

[Action: HT to send relevant information to DT]

WT highlighted that the issue of fake certificates was not confined to the UK and was a global issue. Through his membership of the IAF Database Management Committee he has seen enquiries from other Governments about how to address it. In response, the IAF has set up a task force to look at the issue from a global perspective and one of the proposals is to make the use of ISO 13485 *Medical Devices Quality Management Systems - Requirements for Regulatory Purposes* mandatory during the Covid 19 crisis. He will keep PAC informed of any developments but for now it's case of 'watch this space'.

CR added that as the regulator, HSE was dealing with a range of PPE issues and stressed the importance of UKAS and HSE being joined up. To ensure effective information and best practice sharing he will forward the relevant HSE contact to HT.

[Action: CR to send contact details to HT]

MG referred to the recently published Government guidance on approvals for PPE and self-declaration focused on PPE for the health service and not necessarily requiring Notified Bodies. While UKAS appreciated the need to get adequate PPE supplies to the frontline services as quickly as possible and for additional guidance, it will be vital that this doesn't lead to an undermining of the fundamental system for the existing quality infrastructure by obviating the need for Notified Body approval in the longer term. UKAS has had representations from a large CB expressing concern that if these arrangements are allowed to continue long term it will create a problem for buyers of PPE. A significant percentage of PPE fails at the point of testing; therefore, accredited conformity assessment should remain an important part of any supply chain approval process.

[Action: MG to share links to the guidance with DT and CR- since done]

In response to the need for a joined-up approach to this issue **RS** said that currently BEIS convenes a daily trilateral with HSE and MHRA to coordinate PPE policy. He suggested that **CR** speak to Rick Brunt at HSE to get the HSE's official line. He added also that OPSS was working closely with Trading Standards Offices which also have teams at airports to try and filter out some of the fake PPE being imported.

MG concluded that BEIS and UKAS needed to work more closely together on this issue.

There were no other comments on the draft minutes which were then formally agreed.

3- Matters Arising**3.1. Non-accredited certification**

This was covered under the previous item.

4- Members' Issues

The Chair reminded Members that this additional PAC had been scheduled primarily as an opportunity for reciprocal updates on Covid 19 related issues and on that basis invited contributions.

SK said that EEMUA membership was chiefly engaged in operating potentially hazardous sites requiring inspections. The main issues are a backlog of inspections, including some inspections which need to be rescoped. Additionally, some of the inspection bodies are due UKAS assessments. The key priority expressed by members and their customers is the recognition that current circumstances have necessitated various tweaks and flexibility throughout the quality chain, and they are working to ensure that these don't result in any negative impacts at any level of the supply chain.

DM informed the PAC that BSI have made various standards related to PPE and medical devices free of charge on a temporary basis. BSI test houses are also working at full capacity to speed up the turnaround time for the testing of PPE for the health sector. BSI has also produced guidelines for safer returning to work which are currently on the BSI website for public consultation. **AE** said that he had accessed the guidance and found it very useful. **LT** added that UKAS had already received enquiries from CBs/IBs about certification/inspection of health, safety and wellbeing assurance for workplaces/public spaces especially in the context of Covid-19 infection controls.

[Action: DM to send links to standards and safer return to work guidance to SD for broader circulation]

EC added that the primary focus is now getting people back to the workplace, but next stage is getting people back into workplace and working. There needs to be greater acknowledgment of the role of management systems and the quality professions to ensure that quality has not been undermined during this period.

CS from BMTA noted that the remote assessments carried out during this period by UKAS and other ABs have ensured confidence in the reliability of testing results and will inform future developments in assessment practice. She added that a BMTA calibration member had received lots of requests from organisations seeking information on how calibrations can be conducted remotely. From the ABCB perspective, **WT** added that feedback on UKAS remote assessments from its members was very positive, with some members expressing the view that remote assessments were more effective than actual visits as they enabled greater focus and fewer distractions. Consequently, he concluded that there would continue to be a push from the CB side for more remote assessments post-Covid.

5- UKAS issues

5.1 Update on UKAS response to Covid 19 (MG/LT) (presentation at the meeting)

MG Updated the PAC on the UKAS response to Covid 19, setting out our priorities and some reflections on the effectiveness of our approach. The key points of his presentation were as follows:

- UKAS has worked closely with Public Health England to provide accreditation for pathology labs.
- UKAS has developed a set of guiding principles to inform its response:
 1. **Safety** first, for our staff, customers, stakeholders and contractors,
 2. Ensuring the **integrity** of our services so that trust and confidence of UKAS accreditation remains unaltered,
 3. Pursuing **job-security** for all staff and supporting the needs of our contractors,
 4. Creating **stability** in our core operations and support services by being agile to changing circumstances; and
 5. Maintaining **financial resilience** in the short/long-term through expenditure control and good cash management.

Since the onset of the crisis. Key actions have included:

- Crisis Management Team Meetings – Daily Meetings on strategy and policy and risk assessments,
- Extension of the Remote Assessment Policy and home working – provisional date for return to site assessments from 1st October 2020 – Jan 2021 for overseas,
- Health and Safety: Risk Assessments for on-site and office working,
- Customer Engagement Webinars, FAQs and guidance on website, social media, policy consultation and communications,
- TPS 62 and TPS 73 Published - Policy on Accreditation and Conformity Assessment During the COVID-19 Outbreak.

He added that the UKAS investment in a crisis management system has enabled UKAS to be agile in its response to the crisis. Going Forward **MG** outlined the following priorities to maximise our financial resilience and so avoid staff redundancies and furloughing: early assessment planning, productivity/utilisation for AMs, maximising remote assessment days and reducing external assessor expenditure. He added that the environment going forward remained challenging identifying the extended economic impact of the crisis and the risk of a second wave of lockdown in winter 20/21 as key challenges. In addition to the Covid related challenges the Brexit related challenges remain; in particular the potential impact on our status as the national accreditation body from future trade agreements and our future long term membership of EA.

Secretary's note:

At the last EA General Assembly on 14 May a resolution was passed enabling UKAS to remain an EA Full Member until 31 January 2022. <https://www.ukas.com/news/ukas-remains-a-proud-member-of-ea/>

MG then invited **LT** to update PAC on her work with med labs to support the NHS during the pandemic. Key points covered:

- Testing had to be implemented at pace and scaled – target is now 200k/day and 500K in Sept
- UKAS is working to support the development of capacity to ensure confidence can be placed in the testing (antigen and antibody): Have agreed in a controlled/limited way to postpone some remote assessments to enable labs to ramp up testing
- UKAS is working with the NHS to ensure accredited labs are working towards extending the scope of their accreditation to include these tests.
- *Fastrack* Extension to Scope (ETS) process implemented –coordinating ISO 15189 and ISO/IEC 17025
- 30 ETS applications received so far
- Applications received for new mass testing 'Lighthouse' labs – first visit made
- UKAS advising Dept Health Lab Capacity Review group on selection of offers
- Accreditation granted for 2 labs this week
- Small assessor pool identified –to ensure consistency
- 30+ enquiries from labs who may seek accreditation
- UKAS providing advice to stakeholders on Covid 19 testing and QA requirements

In conclusion, **the Chair** said it was very good to see UKAS' integral role in responding to the country's needs at this difficult time.

PAC/08/20

5.2 'Project P' UKAS work programme to strengthen and protect our role as NAB (HT)

HT spoke to the slides distributed before the meeting and outlined the purpose and objectives of the project:

- This is fundamentally about greater awareness raising to ensure Govt is aware of role/need/value of an NAB (safety, quality, consumer protection) and to promote our importance and value as the NAB for UK PLC
- Key drivers are the ongoing trade negotiations for future trade deals, particularly with the US and EU, broader post-Brexit landscape and overseas competition
- Raise overall awareness of UKAS across other relevant stakeholders to get influence and feedback to trade negotiators and ministers
- Get access to Minister(s), key civil servants and trade negotiators
- To build strong relationships and ensure influence at most appropriate level at DIT and BEIS - now and ongoing.

HT outlined the key elements of the project the highest profile being a series of themed webinar/workshops in June and July, focusing on the role of standards and accreditation in the following areas:

- International Trade,
- Product Safety/Quality/Manufacturing/IR4.0 – role in UK Industrial Strategy,
- Building Safety,
- Environment/Food/Farming.

The project would also include a concerted PR campaign involving marketing/communications/articles and social media campaigns to reach our broader stakeholders.

DM highlighted the need for BSI and UKAS to coordinate their work flagging that the many new officials in DIT had no background or knowledge of standards and accreditation. **WT** wanted to make UKAS aware of the need for wider communication particularly within Europe in relation to certification status in the non-regulatory areas, such as Management Systems, ABCB members reporting that UKAS certificates are not being accepted. **LT** said that we were anticipating this and will continue to work to communicate the message outside of the UK that UKAS certificates are still valid.

AE raised the issue of the new Regulation on Market Surveillance and Compliance of Products (2019/1020) which comes into effect in the EU in June next year and expressed concern that unlike the post transition arrangements for the accreditation elements of 765 /2008 no SI had been drafted to transpose this new Regulation into UK law.

Secretary's note

Following the meeting both **AE** and **SD** have approached BEIS/OPSS directly for clarity about the implementation plans for this new Regulation. As this Regulation comes into effect in the EU after the end of the Transition Period it will not be automatically retained as part of the UK statute book and therefore won't require an SI to amend it as was the case with Regulation on Accreditation and Market Surveillance 765/2008 (RAMS). OPSS has said that for the time being, UK market surveillance will continue to be based on the provisions in RAMS as retained in UK law. The accreditation provisions in RAMS are unchanged by 2019/1020.

5.3 Risk Register (LT)

LT outlined the three main risks which had already been covered in detail under other agenda items:

1. The impact of the pandemic
2. Brexit, ongoing impact or trade negotiations
3. Competition from overseas accreditation bodies trying to make inroads into the UK market, coupled with challenges from UK based bodies purporting to offer an 'accreditation' service

5.4 Update on PAF (SD)

The Chair reminded Members that the earlier decision to cancel the 2020 PAF in September had been reversed and that the PAF would now be held as a virtual event on the 8th September (together with the next PAC). However, the bigger Technical Conference event over several days will now not be held until the new 2021/22 Financial Year. **SD** explained that the format and structure was still being worked out but that UKAS were mindful of members' feedback from the 2019 PAF that a more interactive event would elicit more positive outcomes. She added that holding a virtual event of this size, presents both challenges and opportunities but that UKAS was working to make the event as interactive as possible for example by including both breakout and plenary sessions. UKAS would welcome suggestions from PAC Members on how to maximise the effectiveness of the event, and to that end **SD** will circulate a draft structure for comments within the next couple of weeks.

[Action: SD to circulate draft PAF structure for PAC comments]

Mindful of the PAF/PAC Chair election which will need to take place at the PAF, **the Chair** suggested that it would be timely to review the current Governance measures to ensure that they are still fit for purpose going forward. In particular, he expressed his surprise that currently the election of the successful candidate for Chair is not ratified or endorsed by the UKAS Board and proposed that this step should be introduced as part of the election process. This approach was agreed by the PAC.

[Action: MG to consider this proposal]

6- Reports

6.1 Board Report

The Chair invited **MG** to give a read out from the last UKAS Board meetings on 6th (interim) and 28th April. **MG** then used a presentation to outline the key issues discussed:

- Financial Report - our financial prudence and foresight (business continuity planning and crisis management) has enabled us to sustain a strong financial position despite the significant impact of the number of assessment days lost due to Covid.
- Customer feedback - service excellence remains high on the agenda during the current crisis and UKAS has received high levels of positive feedback across all service areas.
- Remote assessments - the remote assessment model was initially challenging, but assessments are continuously improving, and the customer response has been very positive. Particular considerations/learning areas were around software compatibility, giving customers as much notice as possible before assessments and embodying a risk-based approach. Feedback from UKAS assessor staff has also been positive but there is also a recognition that it is not possible to have the same level of scrutiny in all circumstances; therefore remote assessments should be part of a blended approach going forward (post-Covid).
- Strategic Projects - some of the resources in UKAS' strategic teams have needed to be reduced and we have had to reprioritise some of our projects in response to Covid. Projects which will now be put back include: the bonus scheme for staff, the Technical Conference which was due to take place in September, but which will now take place next financial year and the strategic research project into the value of accreditation. UKAS is continuing with the projects for the CB certificate database, customer and assessor portal and the self-assessment tools.
- Pricing - UKAS introduced a 3% price increase from 1 April. Possibly as result of the price increase coinciding with the onset of the Covid crisis, UKAS received complaints from three laboratories and seven certification bodies which have now been satisfactorily resolved. Overall costs to laboratories and CBs have been reduced as a result of UKAS assessors incurring fewer travel and subsistence costs.
- Branding and symbols - There was a recognition that the current UKAS brand which has remained unchanged since UKAS was established in 1995 has become outdated. Although widely recognised it no longer reflects our broader customer base and no longer works effectively in UKAS' online and offline communication. We need to ensure that the UKAS brand remains relevant. UKAS therefore commissioned the brand agency, Dusted, to consult with internal and stakeholders on how to refresh and modernize the UKAS brand without sacrificing any of its fundamental elements. A final Brand design has now been chosen from the options presented and has been agreed by the UKAS Board. The new logo will retain the use of the Crown which UKAS will continue to license from the Lord Chamberlain's Office via BEIS. It will be launched at the HoL Event in December, together with the new website. In tandem, the UKAS strapline 'Delivering Confidence' will be replaced with a 'A World of Confidence' which stakeholders felt is more reflective of what we do in delivering a world of trust and confidence particularly supporting the UK Government in a post Brexit world. We are still in the process of updating the UKAS symbols for customers to use and will continue to consult with PAC and other stakeholders about timings and final designs.

The next Board meeting is on 14th July.

At the end of **MG's** report **SV** wanted to pay tribute to the Executive for steering the organisation so deftly through the current crisis, particularly the smooth implementation of new digital ways of working at pace. She added how closely UKAS was continuing to monitor the health and wellbeing of its staff. **The Chair** asked **MG** to convey PAC's congratulations to the rest of the UKAS senior team.

6.2 International Programme Activity Report- Q4 Jan-March 2020

PAC/09/20

LT noted that much of the international work had been cancelled or conducted remotely during this period and that there was an expectation that post-Covid it is likely that there will be a more blended approach e.g. remote and physical Committee work.

There were no comments on this report.

7- AOB

SB asked if the Covid crisis would result in increased opportunities for accredited inspection of care homes. **MG** said UKAS was mindful of this issue and of what more could be done for greater use of accreditation in this sector. The intention was for UKAS to work more closely with the CQC to explore further opportunities once the current crisis had abated.

MG -said that we should encourage greater use of Microsoft Teams as it is a very strong and reliable platform for sharing files and for communication between formal meetings. The UKAS Board has found it a very effective tool during this period. He suggested that PAC could make more use of it in this way. **EC** endorsed this approach. However, **CS** raised some concerns about the security of the Teams or Skype platforms and the fact that MoD does not permit the use of it for sharing information. **MG** said he would forward the UKAS IT security policy. **LT** made it clear that UKAS does not share or store customer information on Teams.

[Action: **MG** to share this]

8- Next meetings

Members confirmed their availability for the proposed dates for next year's PAC meetings.

PAC/PAF: 8 September 2020 (virtual).

PAC: 2 Feb 2021- (venue TBC).

PAC: 18 May 2021- (UKAS, Staines)

PAC/PAF: September 2021- Date and venue TBC

ACTIONS

Number	Date raised	Topic	Action	Owner	update
1	3/6/20	Fake PPE certificates	Send information to MoD on UKAS/SCC work to counter fake PPE certificates	HT	
2	3/6/20	HSE contact on PPE issues	HSE to send contact details to HT for HSE PPE lead	CR	CR followed up with HT immediately after PAC
3	3/6/20	BSI PPE Standards and safer return to work guidance	BSI to send links to SD for further circulation	DM/SD	
4	3/6/20	PAF	Members to comment on draft PAF paper	SD	SD to circulate paper for comment by 30//6

Number	Date raised	Topic	Action	Owner	update
5.	3/6/20	UKAS IT Security policy	UKAS to circulate to PAC	SD/MG	SD to circulate with minutes – MG circulated on 24/6